

Archie's Seabreeze

No rooftop bar for now, as Archie's new owners move on to Plan B

The new owners of Archie's Seabreeze initially had ambitious redevelopment plans for a rooftop bar. Then, they received an outpouring of support



Key Points

- When new owners bought Archie's Seabreeze on South Hutchinson Island, they initially planned to tear it down.
- It would have become a multistory apartment complex with a rooftop bar.
- But the outpouring of support, from current and longtime patrons, convinced them to move on to Plan B.

FORT PIERCE — When Phil Thompson [bought Archie's Seabreeze](#) for \$2 million, he initially considered tearing it down for an ambitious redevelopment.

He envisioned a rooftop bar, with panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean, adorning a multistory apartment complex where the eclectic restaurant and bar once stood.

An outpouring of community support for the historic South Hutchinson Island bar, however, convinced Thompson to shelve that idea, at least for now, he said.

As long as Archie's remains profitable in its current form, it'll stay that way, he said. "All the locals, they came down en masse," Thompson said.



News of the changing ownership, which followed TCPalm's reporting of the Sept. 30 sale, spurred many former Archie's regulars to return to the bar for the first time in years, he said. It was like a defibrillator.

"We weren't sure how the community was going to accept it," Thompson said, regarding his purchase. "I'll tell you exactly how they accepted it: We had one of the best weekends here that they've had in four years."

A surge of new and returning customers may be proof for Thompson and Deborah Lally, his wife, that Archie's can be profitable and worth preserving.

The rooftop bar was "Plan A," Thompson said. "We're actually in Plan B right now. We think Plan B is going to be a hit."

"Archie's isn't going anywhere. Archie's is staying," Lally said. "Archie's is going to be coming back to life again."

'A golden egg'

Archie's was founded by Archie Summerlin in 1947. He turned a World War II Navy guard shack into a beachside beer joint. Over the years, it became a beloved and colorful fixture — known for its "No shoes, no shirt, no problem" mantra.

Thompson posed his rooftop bar idea to customers, he said. A high-rise rooftop bar would be a unique attraction for Fort Pierce.

"Everybody loves the idea of it, but they love this more," he said, standing inside the bar



Archie's is chock-full of memorabilia. Dollar bills hanging from the ceiling and swaying in the ocean breeze, signed portraits mounted on the walls, a poster that lists "15 reasons why a beer is better than a woman" and countless license plates from a large swath of states.

Even the tiling on the floor contains a bit of local history: a tile reportedly left by Navy Seals, successors to the Navy frogmen who trained on the island during World War II.

"We have a golden egg here," Thompson said.

The new owners are planning renovation projects for the interior and outside bar areas, motorcycle and car shows in the parking lot and for more live band performances.

"I know people say we're developers, that we're going to demo it in the springtime, but that's not going to happen," he said. "We're putting a lot of money into this place. We're very excited about it. Yes, we are developers. We do build and we do develop. But this we're actually having a really good time with. We're going to give it a good run."



Coral Sands, a luxury housing development just a short walk from Archie's, is one of Thompson's projects on Hutchinson Island.

At Archie's later that evening, Larry Robb sat at the bar smoking a cigarette. He's been a regular at Archie's for about 15 years, he said. He's seen the bar's peaks and troughs.

Robb likes Archie's for its "good people, good vibes, good music and good food," he said. "When they started bringing back the live music, business started coming back."

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